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University of South Carolina

A Statement
OF THE
Rural School Problem
IN
South Carolina

W. K. TATE

State Supervisor of Elementary Rural Schools

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ELEMENTARY RURAL SCHOOLS.

To the State Board of Education.

Gentlemen: As State Supervisor of Elementary Rural Schools, I have regarded myself as a special officer of the Department of Education to whom has been assigned special duties. The six months during which I have held this office have not been employed in the collection of statistics, nor in the tabulation of results. Complete statistical information concerning the status of the schools with which my work is connected will form a part of the report of the State Superintendent of Education.

As a field of special effort, the rural schools of South Carolina is a virgin one. Naturally the work of the first six months has been directed largely to renewing a first-hand acquaintance with rural school conditions. I began my work after the close of the schools in June and have had only two months in which to observe actual school operations. Part of the summer was spent in visiting the summer schools for teachers held in various counties of the State, in holding conferences with the County Superintendents, and in special visits to communities which were endeavoring to effect consolidation of schools, to vote special taxes, or to further some other progressive educational movement. Since the rural schools opened about October 15th, I have spent most of the time in the field studying conditions in typical counties of the State. It has been my custom to meet the County Superintendent of Education and spend four days with him, visiting his schools, seeing the work of the teachers, talking with the patrons and trustees, addressing meetings of the school community, and, with the County Superintendent, forming plans for the improvement of conditions. The week has usually closed with a meeting of the school trustees at the county seat, in which we have discussed school improvement in all its phases. County Trustees' Associations have been formed at these meetings in order to bring about a greater unity of effort on the part of the men to whom the rural districts must look for local leadership.

At the request of the State Superintendent of Education, the President of Winthrop College and the County Superintendent of Education of York County, the Rural School Supervisor is endeavoring to assist in the direction of the work of Miss Leila A.

Russell, the Special Rural School Supervisor in that county. During the year it is our purpose to effect in this county the very best organization possible. Miss Russell has entered upon her work with rare wisdom and enthusiasm and the county is to be congratulated on having secured her services. Her report is submitted herewith.

In accordance with the resolution of the State Board, I have examined many building plans submitted for State aid under the School Building Act. This work has frequently involved extensive correspondence and recasting of the original plans submitted. A full statement of the operations of this Act forms a part of the report of the State Superintendent of Education.

Through the kindness of the United States government and the courtesy of Senators Tillman and Smith my office has been supplied by the Department of Agriculture with copies of helpful bulletins relating to agricultural instruction in the rural schools. Five thousand copies each of "Boys' and Girls' Agricultural Clubs," "School Lessons on Corn" and "School Exercises in Plant Production" have been distributed among the county superintendents and teachers of the State. In my work I have endeavored on all occasions to emphasize "The Boys' Corn Club" and other agricultural movements.

In accordance with the request of the State Superintendent, it gives me pleasure to state in a general way the rural school problem of South Carolina as it appears to me after six months of work in this field, during which I have visited thirty counties of the State.

STATEMENT OF THE RURAL SCHOOL PROBLEM IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

We are accustomed to speak of the public education of South Carolina as a school system. Six months of work in the rural schools of the State, however, have confirmed my opinion that we have in the rural schools of this State nothing which can properly be called a system. The public schools of South Carolina began early in the history of the State. Much effort has been expended in their behalf. Many agencies have striven seriously to improve educational conditions. There has been a general advance. From one generation to another the improvement has been noticeable, and in many instances marked. This work, however, has been slow and halting because we have never seriously undertaken the task of making our public schools into anything like a system. In the various counties of the

State I have found in certain communities a local leadership, which has developed and maintained excellent schools. In a neighboring community which has lacked this leadership the conditions not only have not advanced, but have retrograded in the last twenty years. "Where there is no vision the people perish." This educational vision in South Carolina under our prevalent lack of system is a local matter. Where some strong, wise, local leader has directed the community effort there is a good school. Where no such leader exists the community languishes.

I. BETTER COUNTY SUPERVISION NEEDED.

I am fully convinced that the first requisite to any substantial improvement in the rural schools of South Carolina is a better plan of supervision. With an efficient County Superintendent adequately remunerated for his services and enabled to spend all his time visiting the schools and directing their development, the whole county may have what is now possible only in the most advanced communities. It has been my observation that people are willing to listen to the advice of a man who has carefully studied their needs and who presents a well-digested plan of action. The County Superintendent is the educational engineer of the county.

The greatest difference between the city schools and the country schools of this State consists in the better supervision of the city schools. The city of Columbia, for example, has fewer teachers than any county in the State. It has only about 3,500 children enrolled. In this city there is a superintendent who receives a salary of not less than \$2,000 per year, who devotes all his time to the supervision of the schools. Each building has a principal, who gives part of his time to supervision, and, in addition, there are supervisors of primary methods, manual training, sewing and music. In common with the other city schools of the United States, Columbia spends from eight to ten per cent. of its total school expenditures for supervision. Moreover, the schools of Columbia are concentrated into a small area, which makes supervision comparatively easy. Most of the teachers are college graduates and have received special preparation for teaching. To these teachers are assigned the children of one grade only and the problem of teaching is thus immensely simplified. The teachers hold their positions from year to year and their work proceeds with a certain mechanical regularity.

In the schools of a neighboring county there are 150 teachers and

more than 8,000 pupils. As in other counties of the State, most of these teachers are without college training or other special preparation for their work. They are earnest, conscientious young people who have completed the work of the common schools and have secured a teacher's certificate. More than half of them change places every year. Each teacher must teach all grades of work in a school where the children are irregular in attendance and poorly classified. The task before her is infinitely more difficult than that which confronts the teacher in the city school. If any teachers in the United States need help and supervision, it is the rural teachers. The county should pay for the services of a trained and experienced man, who should devote all his time to organizing his county, stimulating educational interest, visiting the schools and assisting the untrained teachers in their arduous tasks. The typical county in South Carolina pays its county superintendent \$700 per year, which is less than two per cent. of the county school expenditures. The payment of this meager compensation assumes that he is expected to devote only part of his time to the duties of his office, and that he will make a living at some other occupation. The State is getting excellent returns on the money invested.

Moreover, the superintendent of one of our city schools is elected for a term of years by a stable Board of Trustees. The county superintendent in South Carolina must offer himself before the primary and, at considerable expense, make the race for the office. Throughout his term he must continually trim his sails to the varying winds of popular opinion. This inevitably prevents the adoption of a comprehensive and consistent educational policy. I am thoroughly convinced that to remedy this unfortunate state of affairs and to provide our rural schools with adequate and stable supervision is the first great duty of the people of South Carolina in the development of a rural school system.

A Remedy Suggested: Allow me to suggest a scheme of supervision which in my opinion would meet our needs:

1st. There should be a county board of education, elected by the people, appointed by the State Board of Education, appointed by the State Superintendent of Education or the Governor on the recommendation of the legislative delegation, or in some other manner, to serve for six years, the terms of one-third of the Board expiring every two years.

2d. This County Board of Education should select the county superintendent of schools just as the City School Board selects the city superintendent.

3d. This election should be for a term of four years.

4th. The county superintendent should be paid a salary which will enable him to devote his entire time to the supervision of the schools. The minimum salary should be \$1,200 per year.

5th. The county board of education should also be authorized and empowered to employ such assistance to the county superintendent of education as is necessary to the thorough supervision of the rural schools and the training of the rural teachers.

6th. The county board of education should be empowered to levy a special county tax, not to exceed one mill, to be devoted to the supervision of the rural schools.

When these things are done we may look forward to an era of steady improvement and the development of a county system of schools.

II. THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR THE RURAL SCHOOLS.

Any one who visits the remoter rural sections of South Carolina and observes the unfavorable conditions under which the teachers are working can not fail to be impressed with the noble spirit of these young people whose labors mean so much to the State. (I say young advisedly, because most of them are young). On them rests finally the responsibility of training the rising generation to efficient citizenship. Only a small per cent. of them have graduated from college, or even from a high school. Few have had any professional preparation for their work other than an occasional short term summer school for teachers.

The graduates of the normal schools, which give special preparation for teaching, find places in the towns and cities of the State where the work is more congenial and the remuneration higher.

Winthrop College and the Department of Education at the University have done a great work in the training of teachers, but their work has failed to reach the rural school in any thorough manner.

Most of the Winthrop students whom we find teaching in the rural schools are those who have attended the college one or two years and have not taken any of the pedagogical work. As a total result, it is usual to find in the rural school of South Carolina a teacher

possessed of intelligence, and often enthusiasm, but who has never studied the special problems involved in teaching. The methods she employs are those which have been handed down from generation to generation. The ordinary school routine in many instances might have been found in the rural schools of the State forty years ago. These teachers are frequently eager for ideas which will assist them. In my work I have seen a half hour's assistance from the trained supervisor completely change a teacher's method of teaching primary reading. The training of these teachers is, next to providing efficient supervision, the supreme educational task of the State. Of course the ideally trained teacher should be a college graduate, who has also completed a normal course and has developed her skill by successful experience. It will be a long time before the rural schools of South Carolina will be provided with such teachers. It is unnatural to expect the college graduate to seek work in a rural community when a more remunerative city school is calling for her. As long as seventy-five per cent. of the teaching force in South Carolina are women, we may expect even the professionally trained college graduate to marry after a few years of teaching and leave her place to a less experienced successor. The average teaching life in South Carolina is less than four years. This instability is naturally more evident in the rural community where the conditions of work are less favorable. We may expect it to continue for many years and must adapt our policies to it.

Proposed Remedies:

In my opinion the first step in the training of the rural teachers should be the appointment in each county of a trained Supervisor of Methods who should visit the schools, observe the work of the teachers, assist them in organizing their schools, in classifying their pupils, and in the adoption of correct methods of teaching. This supervisor should hold district and county meetings of the teachers, should prepare outlines of work, organize county reading circles, and meet the needs of the teachers as they appear from visits to the individual schools. A few years of such intelligent direction by a trained supervisor will double the efficiency of our unskilled rural teachers. The University of South Carolina and Winthrop College would find their widest field of usefulness in training these county supervisors.

The next step in the training of teachers should be the re-establishment of the State Summer School for Teachers at Winthrop College. The work of the summer courses should be specially adapted to the

needs of the rural schools. The methods of organizing and classifying rural schools, methods of teaching the elementary subjects, and the adaptation of the course of study to the special needs of rural life should be emphasized in every possible way.

I feel that the policy of the State looking to the professional training of teachers has, in many respects, been short-sighted. Every year we spend \$70,000 in scholarships in State institutions, for the training of teachers. While the State thus lavishes money freely for the education of people who *may possibly* teach, it has for many years refused to appropriate the most modest sum for the improvement of the teachers who are *now actually* at work in the schools of South Carolina. Every facility should be offered to encourage the rural teachers of South Carolina to better professional training. It might be that a reward by the State for work done would produce equally as good results as the payment in advance for work which we hope a scholarship student may do.

In my opinion three months' courses to be offered during the regular school year should be planned for Winthrop College, designed specifically to help teachers who are actually at work and who expect to continue in the profession. Such courses are offered in many States, and while they are in no sense a substitute for a full course, they will at least eliminate some of the crudest of the prevalent errors.

Recognition of College Diplomas: The State Board of Education has recognized the diplomas of many State and denominational colleges in South Carolina as credentials upon which teachers' certificates shall be issued. While the academic training of many of these colleges is excellent, they offer in many cases no work which gives special training for teaching. We should recognize frankly the fact that the very best instruction in higher mathematics, ancient languages, chemistry, English literature, engineering, or military science does not prevent the young teacher from making the most egregious blunders in organizing his school, or in teaching primary reading and arithmetic. Even a three months' course in the elements of practical pedagogy would prevent the worst of these mistakes. If our State law continues to recognize a college diploma as entitling the holder to a teacher's certificate, with this privilege should be coupled as a prerequisite the presentation of a certificate that the applicant has taken at least a three months' course in some approved school giving normal training.

The Certification of Teachers: The present method of granting teachers' certificates in this State has produced a chaos which only one in actual touch with the situation can appreciate. The State Board of Education sends out twice every year a uniform set of examination questions for teachers' certificates. The papers written in answer to these questions are graded by forty-three county boards of education with forty-three different standards. On the results of these examinations county certificates are issued. Some counties recognize the certificates of other counties, while others refuse this recognition. Some county superintendents and county boards are careful in issuing certificates, while in other counties at least twenty-five per cent. of the teachers are teaching on certificates improperly and illegally granted.

There is in existence no complete list of all the qualified teachers of the State, and the compilation of such a list is impossible. Each county superintendent merely knows the registered teachers in his own county. This fact prevents a free exchange of teachers from one county to another and makes the Teachers' Agency the principal method of communication between teachers and school boards. As a partial result of a system which limits the teacher's field of acquaintance, it is a conservative estimate to say that one-fourth of the common school teachers teaching this year in South Carolina are paying a percentage of their salaries to teachers' agencies for services rendered in securing their present positions. In my opinion, the examination questions should be prepared under the direction of the State Board of Education, the examination held by the county superintendent, as at present, the papers graded by some central authority, and a certificate good anywhere in the State issued thereon. The State Superintendent of Education could then have in his office a complete roster of all persons qualified to teach in South Carolina and copies of this roster could be on file in the office of every county superintendent in the State. This would bring some order out of the present chaos and would be a material relief to all parties.

III. SCHOOL FINANCES.

The fact that the common school expenditures for South Carolina have doubled in the past seven years should be a source of gratification to every patriotic citizen. Of course we all recognize the fact, however, that our expenditures are still far below the standard of the United States.

There are three elements which should always enter into school support—State taxation, county taxation and local taxation.

The mere existence of a State school system is a recognition of the fact that the welfare of the whole State is to be conserved only by providing schools for all sections. All parts of the commonwealth have contributed to the production of the wealth concentrated largely in the cities and larger industrial enterprises, and this wealth should share in the taxation for the maintenance of schools in the poorer sections. Such State taxation is provided for in the constitution and the principle has been given practical recognition by the Legislature in the School Extension Act, the High School Act and the School Building Act. It should receive in the future even larger recognition.

The county element is embodied in the constitution of the State in the form of the three-mill tax.

The increase in the number of districts voting a special levy for the support of their schools has been specially gratifying during the past year. The last Legislature very wisely conditioned State aid under the Extension Act on the voting of at least a two-mill special tax. Since the money raised by special taxation is spent under the direction of a local representative of those who pay the taxes and for the support of their local schools, it is one of the most popular forms of taxation in South Carolina. With the additional incentive of State aid to those who help themselves, this form of taxation is destined to become universal.

In connection with the voting of special taxes difficulties have arisen in many counties in the State because of the indefiniteness of the district lines and because the county tax books are kept by townships, rather than by school districts. It frequently happens that because of this indefiniteness certain residents of the district escape the special tax, and the poll tax and dog tax are improperly apportioned. If the district lines were definitely established by the county board of education and the duplicate list were entered in the auditor's books, alphabetically by school districts, rather than by townships, copies of the list could be made by the county superintendent of education and checked up by the district trustees with much more satisfactory results. There is at least one county in the State which pursues this plan with eminent satisfaction. The money saved to the county school fund in one year by such a procedure would pay the entire cost of a county survey to fix district boundaries.

IV. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

An examination of the statistics of the State Superintendent will reveal the fact that the school attendance in the rural districts of South Carolina is far from satisfactory. In the course of my visits in many counties during the past two months I have rarely found more than fifty per cent. of the ordinary annual enrollment actually in school. In many instances not more than twenty per cent. of the children ordinarily enrolled were in school. This statement does not take into consideration the children who should be in school, but who do not attend at all during the session. I have made diligent inquiry as to the cause of this negligence. Sometimes the children are picking cotton or attending to some other farm work. More frequently they have simply "not started yet." I have been more impressed with our negligence along this line since a recent visit to the schools of Indiana, where in a whole county the percentage of attendance for the first two months of the session this year was over ninety-five per cent. With all our educational endeavor, it is impossible to teach children who are not in school. If the farm work prevents the children from coming in October, the schools should not be opened until the children can attend. The opening of the schools should be made an important event in the community and teachers and trustees should all combine to secure a full enrollment on the first day. The present irregular entrance and more irregular attendance prevent classification and graduation of the pupils and nullify the best efforts of a good teacher.

Compulsory Attendance Law: I am thoroughly convinced that the time is ripe in South Carolina for the beginning of a compulsory attendance law. Only by such a law will we get into the schools some of the children who need most the advantages which the school offers. There are counties in the State where public opinion is sufficiently advanced to enforce such a law and these counties should be given the privilege of bringing to pass a better state of affairs in school attendance. In the meantime, every citizen of South Carolina who believes that an educated citizenship is the only guarantee of prosperity and true greatness, should lend his voice to the development of a sentiment which will put the children of the State in school and decrease the percentage of illiteracy.

Definition of Enrollment: As contributory to better school attendance, I would suggest the advisability of changing the definition of enrollment, upon which the constitutional three-mill tax is

apportioned to the districts of the county. At present, by the definition of the Legislature, ten days during the previous scholastic session is necessary to enrollment. This encourages negligence as to regular attendance. If this definition were changed to average daily attendance, it would give to teachers, trustees and patrons a pecuniary incentive to regular school attendance and bring about at once material improvement in conditions.

V. CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOLS AND TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS.

We have far too many rural schools in South Carolina. All over the State we find these small schools taught by one teacher and housed in buildings poorly adapted to school purposes, devoid of all beauty or attractiveness, and unprovided with the most necessary facilities for school work. The teacher has all grades of pupils from the beginners to the high school. She has frequently as many as thirty-five recitations per day and even then her pupils are poorly graded and classified. The school does not appeal to the pride of the community and does not grow in the affections of the pupils. Only the most inexperienced teacher can be induced to undertake the arduous task, and changes are an annual occurrence. Such a school has never satisfied the progressive rural community. In many sections of the State, fortunately, there is a strong movement toward the consolidation of these weak schools into stronger schools employing two or more teachers. Such schools may be more easily housed in a comfortable building, are provided with better equipment, and offer greater opportunities for satisfactory work to pupil and teacher. Frequently these consolidated schools become rural high schools and true centres of community life. It should be a State policy to accelerate in every way this educational movement, which has made notable progress in many States of the United States and has never failed to bring better educational conditions. With our sparse white population in South Carolina it is more difficult than in some States to bring to a central school enough children for two or three teachers. Several communities in the State have adopted the plan of transporting at public cost the more distant children in the district. This plan has been used for years in other sections of the country and always with great satisfaction. I believe that it should be encouraged by offering special aid to consolidated schools which are willing to undertake it. The School Extension Act now limits

the State appropriation to the amount raised by special taxation, not to exceed \$100. I believe that a further appropriation of \$100 to consolidated schools employing two or more teachers to be used in maintaining wagons for the transportation of pupils would speedily convince the State of the feasibility of the transportation idea. In no case should the total State appropriation to the district exceed the local tax.

VI. SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

Perhaps the greatest advantage which has accrued to the State from the School Building Act passed by the last Legislature has been the opportunity given the State Board to suggest plans for school buildings, and to insist that the buildings erected by State aid should conform to certain well-recognized principles of school architecture. If this Act should be continued for five years, we shall witness notable improvement in school buildings all over the State. Nearly all the States issue special bulletins on rural school architecture for the information of those charged with the erection of buildings. Such a bulletin has been issued by Clemson College at the request of the State Department of Education and will, it is hoped, perform a much needed service for South Carolina.

VII. CLASSIFICATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS.

Great differences exist in the efficiency of the rural schools of the State. In one community we find a school housed in an adequate building, provided with satisfactory equipment, taught by two or more teachers with professional training and successful experience, and continuing for nine months in the year. This district has perhaps voted a special tax and has exerted itself in every way to develop a school which will meet the needs of a progressive community.

In a neighboring district will be found a miserable makeshift of a school building violating every principle of common sense and hygiene, taught by an untrained and inexperienced teacher with a third grade certificate. The district perhaps does not vote a special tax and the school continues for only four months in the year, with very irregular attendance. In the record of the county superintendent and the State Superintendent of Education there is nothing to indicate the difference in these two schools. If the Department of Education were authorized to develop a scheme of classification by which the rural schools

of the State could be grouped into classes on the basis of building and equipment, number and efficiency of teaching force, length of term, enrollment and attendance, there would be a constant incentive to pupils, teacher and community to advance from the lower to the higher class. A county certificate might be given to all pupils who complete satisfactorily the course of study in the elementary school.

VIII. THE ADAPTATION OF THE COURSE OF STUDY TO THE NEEDS OF RURAL LIFE.

It has been frequently charged that education tends to take the boy or girl away from the farm. Many of our text-books seem to have been made with the city school in mind and the ideas held before the pupils are not those connected with the farm and country life. As far as possible, the course of study in the rural school should take its material from the life of the pupil and the community, should open his eyes to the possibilities of the farm, and should awaken in him the desire to develop the country into a satisfactory place of abode for a man of refined and cultivated tastes, rather than lead him away from it into the pursuits of the town or city. This adaptation of the course of study is one of the problems which has not yet been worked out, but which is now in the process of solution. The great work which has been done by "The Boys' Corn Club" in South Carolina during the past three years under the direction of the County Superintendents of Education and the Farm Demonstration Agents reveals the possibilities of this work of adaptation. If our educated boys are to become interested in agriculture as a pursuit, their attention must be turned in this direction while they are young. The best method of turning the boy's thoughts to agriculture is through some definite agricultural experiment in which he is engaged. The rural school should be the centre of inspiration in all work of this kind. Many agencies are now at work for the improvement of the agriculture of the State. All these forces should be correlated for work in the schools and should co-operate through a State director of agricultural education, who should be an official of the State Department of Education. Clemson College, the University and Winthrop College should offer special courses for teachers of agriculture in rural schools and this work should receive special assistance by State appropriations.

IX. NEGRO EDUCATION.

Since the great bulk of the negroes of South Carolina live in the country, negro education is largely a rural school problem. Last year the State spent \$368,000 on the education of the negro children. While this amount is not large when reckoned on a per capita basis, it is large enough to demand better supervision in its expenditure than has been customary in South Carolina. It has been my observation that the negro schools of South Carolina are for the most part without supervision of any kind. Frequently the county superintendent does not know where they are located and sometimes the district board can not tell where the negro school is taught. It is customary for the board of trustees to allot a certain amount of money to the negroes and allow them to use it as they please. A teacher is employed and no further questions are asked, except concerning enrollment at the end of the session. In determining this enrollment there are gross irregularities all over the State. Since the apportionment of the constitutional three-mill tax is made to the district on the total enrollment of whites and blacks, it is as important to have as correct reports from the negro schools as from the white. Sometimes the salary of the negro teacher is made dependent on the number of pupils enrolled and a direct incentive is given to the teacher to pad the returns and secure to the district an unfair advantage in the apportionment of the county funds. Frequently mistakes in reports occur from ignorance on the part of the teacher.

Since the negro country school is without supervision of any kind, it has in most cases reverted to the most primitive type and is wholly without adaptation to the practical needs of the negro race. I believe the time has come for the school authorities to recognize their responsibility to the State in the supervision and direction of negro education and the prevention of the needless waste now illustrated in nearly every negro school in the State. The objections to negro education arise chiefly from the feeling that it unfits the negro for the place he must fill in the life of the State, and that the so-called educated negro too often becomes a loafer or a political agitator. If this objection be well founded, it is not a condemnation of education in general, but of the particular kind of negro education which we have been supporting. True education for every man must include preparation for efficiency. The best education for the negro is that which will enable him to do best the work which constitutes his contribution to the welfare of the State. This work at present is

manual, and largely agricultural. If the negroes in South Carolina are to cultivate the soil, the education which they receive should enable them to cultivate the soil more intelligently and to make it yield better returns to them and to the owners. Practical instruction in agriculture and household arts, in cleanliness and sanitation, with the rudiments of a common school education will mean most to the negro and most to us all. Can we not devise a movement similar to the Boys' Corn Club as a means of producing a more intelligent cultivation of the soil on the part of the race which for years to come will form the principal agricultural class in South Carolina? This question should challenge the wisdom and patriotism of the educational leaders of the State.

X. THE OUTLOOK.

The educational outlook in South Carolina is most auspicious. Observers of wide experience have recently said that conditions are more favorable now for the rapid progress of educational movements in South Carolina than in any other Southern State.

All the civic and educational forces are working together to a common end. The spirit of co-operation needs only to be organized to insure success. The revision of the school law now in progress will give us the machinery with which to utilize the splendid forces now arrayed for popular education.

XI. REPORT OF MISS LEILA A. RUSSELL,

COUNTY SUPERVISOR OF YORK COUNTY.

Mr. W. K. Tate, State Supervisor of Elementary Rural Schools.

"Dear Sir: The following report on my work is respectfully submitted.

"For the past two months all my efforts have been directed toward upbuilding the rural schools of York County. In the interest of this work a trip to Washington was made the latter part of August. Here a conference with Dr. Wickliffe Rose and Prof. A. P. Bourland and two days spent in the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Education securing aids and suggestions were invaluable to me. The enthusiasm and inspiration thus gained gave impetus to the work begun a few weeks later in York County with its forty-five school districts and about ninety schools for white children—a rich field for supervision.

"The schools of the county did not open, as a general thing, until the last of October or the first of November, many of them not before the fifteenth; hence the greater part of the two months has been spent in investigating conditions, talking with trustees and patrons, and making practical suggestions for improvement in grounds, buildings and equipment.

"Thirty-seven school communities in nineteen school districts have been visited. Wherever a school was found in session time has been spent in observing the work of the teachers, in teaching for them, and in discussing with them the difficulties arising in their work. In sections where consolidation is needed meetings of patrons have been held, the plan with all its advantages presented, and its adoption urged. One of the most difficult problems connected with this work of consolidation is the location of the consolidated school building, each patron wishing it to be very convenient for his children. Believing that this consolidation is the panacea for most of the woes of rural schools, I have been trying to bring about the establishment of five consolidated schools. To this end six meetings of the patrons of the schools to be consolidated have been held.

"Mr. W. K. Tate, State Supervisor of Rural Schools, has spent a week with me, aiding greatly in leading the people to make definite decisions. In school district No. 5, an unconstitutional district containing an area of about seventy-five square miles, the people have decided to take the steps necessary to divide the district into three districts. Two of these will have one school each, three schools being united in one case, in the other two. In the third district there are three schools, but it is believed that one of them will eventually absorb the other two. When these districts have been secured, an attempt to levy a special tax will be made in at least two of them.

"Local taxation is becoming a more popular thing in York County. As a result of two meetings of patrons held, one in school district No. 18 and the other in No. 41, the people at once circulated petitions calling for an election to decide whether or not a special tax levy should be made.

"The county press has taken great interest in the work and has been used freely to arouse the people in the country to the fact that their schools need attention.

"I have written a personal letter making helpful suggestions to every teacher whose name could be secured, and have prepared and sent to them my bulletin, Suggestions for Rural Schools, together with several other bulletins bearing on school work.

"It is planned to have township exhibits of rural school work next spring, and later to make a county exhibit. It is planned, further, to organize the teachers of the various townships into reading circles for the study of some line of work that will make them more efficient as educational forces in their communities. Catawba Township is the only one that has been organized thus far. Here the teachers are going to study Kern's "Among Country Schools."

"LEILA A. RUSSELL,

"County Supervisor Rural Schools, York County."

Respectfully submitted,

W. K. TATE,

State Supervisor Elementary Rural Schools.

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